

North Korean 1st Lt. Jang Ill Ok (left), Army Capt. Emily Nay (back) and Air Force Capt. Wendy Emminger do an aerial ballet as they scramble for the ball during the first women's soccer match of the Military World Games. North Korea beat the United States, 4-0.

PLAYING THEIR HEARTS OUT

BY TECH. SGT. CECILIO RICARDO

AIRMEN TEST SKILLS AT MILITARY GAMES SHOOTOUT IN INDIA

After a 27-hour plane ride, 1st Lt. Paul Gensic had a hard time adjusting when he finally arrived in Hyderabad, India. He went there to represent the United States in the Military World Games pole vault competition.

By Tech. Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo Jr.



2nd Lt. Christopher Knaute competes in the 200-meter butterfly stroke finals, where he finished in eighth place.

The financial management officer and U.S. Air Force Academy graduate was dead tired, found the food too spicy and needed sleep. Plus, his favorite pole didn't arrive with him.

"It was very stressful, but I couldn't do anything about it," Lieutenant Gensic said. The member of the Air Force World Class Athlete Program said, "I was trying to make the food adjustment, my body clock was 12 hours off and I got sick the day before my competition."

No matter. He still hit the field at Gachibowli Stadium to jump in the 4th International Military Sports Council event.

He was the first American to win a medal at the games — silver in the pole vault with a jump of 16-8 3/4.

The lieutenant was one of 132 U.S. military athletes at the games, which included more than 5,000 other military athletes from 101 nations. The part-time American athletes, including 38 Airmen, faced tough competition. Some teams had full-time Olympians.

But that didn't stop the Americans from beating some world-class competition and bringing home 10 medals.

"We played our hearts out and left it on the field," Capt. Anna

Fischer said of the soccer match between the United States and North Korea. The C-130 Hercules navigator from Hurlburt Field, Fla., said the Korean squad had 11 Olympians.

"We did the best we could, but they were technically very sound," she said.

Though the Americans lost the match 4-0, "the best thing about our team was that we didn't give up," team member Army Capt. Laura Schroeder said. She works at the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency at Fort Belvoir, Va. The team finished fifth.

Lt. Col. Rhonda Reichel was one of the few to bring home a gold medal. She helped the Americans win the formation sky diving competition. And jumping with members of the Army's Golden Knights parachute team, the chief of the commander's action group at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, helped the team take silver in the women's overall parachuting.

Russia won the most medals: 42 gold, 29 silver and 29 bronze. China took home 36 gold, 22 silver and 13 bronze medals. The Americans brought home two gold, six silver and two bronze medals. ♡

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Jennifer A. Villalovos



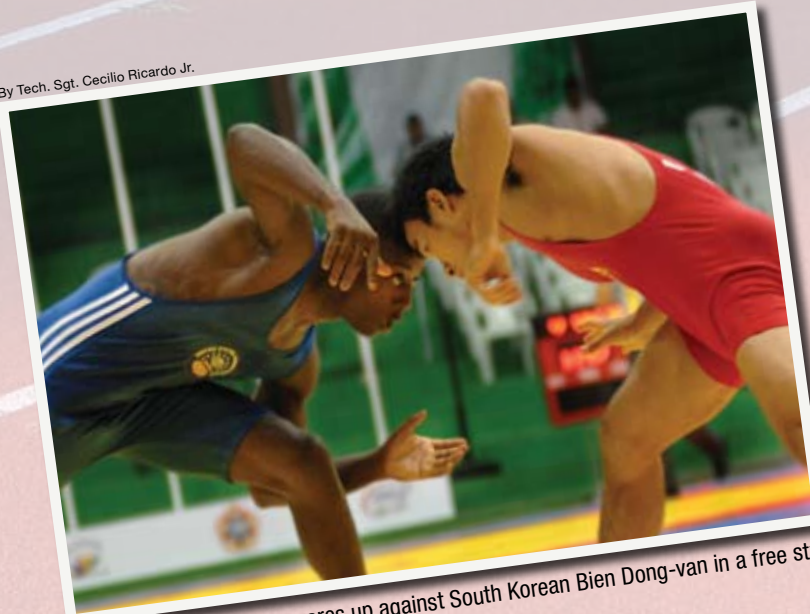
Capt. Wendy Emminger hugs teammate 1st Lt. Elanine Tatarek after the lieutenant scored the first goal of the United States soccer match against Canada. The Americans won 3-0 and placed 5th in the competition.

By Sgt. Steven Phillips



Tech. Sgt. Latisha Moulds sprints for the finish line in the 100-meter dash, finishing fourth in her heat at Gachibowli Stadium in Hyderabad, India.

By Tech. Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo Jr.



Capt. Anthony Booker squares up against South Korean Bien Dong-van in a free style wrestling match in the 110-121 pound division.

By Tech. Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo Jr.



2nd Lt. Julie Van't Wout saves a point 10 feet off the volleyball court in a match against the Canadian women's volleyball team. The U.S. team won the match 3 games to 1.

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Lt. Col. Rhonda Reichel comes in for a landing in accuracy jump in the parachuting competition, which took place over Hakimpt Air Force Station. The colonel won a gold medal in formation sky diving. She also won a silver medal in the women's overall competition.

By Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey A. Wolfe



1st Lt. Paul Gensic falls back to earth after his pole vault. The lieutenant was the first American medal winner at the 4th Military World Games in Hyderabad, India, taking a silver medal with a jump of 16-8 3/4.